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AUTHOR	Enos, Anya Dozier
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ABSTRACT

Pueblo communities want local research to be linked to community needs. To address this requirement, university research must shift from a set agenda that addresses personal or professional goals to a flexible design that moves toward a community-based goal. This can be achieved through collaboration with the Pueblo community. Key to developing this collaboration is the ability to listen in the Native style and the establishment of concrete ties with the community. The Native style of listening focuses on understanding and respecting the viewpoint of the speaker, as opposed to the academic style of listening, which focuses on questioning, even challenging, others' ideas. Research in Pueblo communities must follow a protocol that includes meeting with the Pueblo governor to present the research project. The governor gives direction on further protocol, which will vary with tribal communities. Continuing dialogue with the community throughout the research process is necessary. An example of a community-based environmental education model implemented at the Santa Fe Indian School demonstrates aspects of community-outsider communication and collaboration relevant to research projects. The staff was composed of community members and non-Indians, and the program addressed community-based needs. A discussion and listening period lasting several months established that the community would decide the focus of the environmental curriculum, and the school would write the curriculum, encompassing math and science. A figure depicts a process for designing and gathering research that fits Pueblo philosophies. (Contains 15 references.) (TD)

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Listening: Implications for Qualitative Research

by Anya Dozier Enos, Ph.D.
Santa Fe Indian School – **aenos@sfis.k12.nm.us**

My discussion of doing research within Native American populations focuses on research specifically with Pueblo communities in New Mexico, so I begin with a short background on these Pueblos. Since this is an oral presentation, I have chosen to set the stage for the research findings informally. Please bear with me.

There are 19 Indian Pueblo communities in New Mexico. One of the northernmost Pueblos is Santa Clara Pueblo. This is the Pueblo I belong to; this is where my ancestors and I are from. I thought a very brief history of these Pueblos might be helpful. The Pueblo lifestyle and culture date back 1,000 years. Villages made up of apartment-style housing served populations of a few hundred people, and these villages had trade and ceremonial connections to other villages within a radius of several hundred miles. Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, where an astronomical computer, the sun dagger, was recently re-discovered (Nobel, 1984), and the cliff dwellings at Mesa Verde in Colorado are examples of these villages and their networks.

A few hundred years before contact with Europeans, the descendents of Chaco and Mesa Verde left those communities and set up small villages (called Pueblos) on mesas and near rivers. At the time of contact, more than 60 of these villages existed (Spicer, 1970). Due primarily to new diseases introduced by Europeans, many villages shrank in size. The remaining population of those now tiny villages joined larger villages where the people spoke the same language.

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There are three large language groups represented among the New Mexico Pueblos: Zuni, Keres, and Tanoan. The Tanoan language group is divided further into the Tewa, Tiwa, and Towa languages. These five languages: Zuni, Keres, Tewa, Tiwa, and Towa are separate languages; for example Tewa speakers cannot understand Towa (Dozier, 1970).

Even with the differences in language, much of the culture is similar among the 19 Pueblos. Pueblos that do not speak a common language may also have ceremonial activities in common. Therefore, communication between Pueblos is not always dependent on language. Now, of course, almost everyone in Pueblo communities speaks English. Many Pueblos are concerned about the possibility of losing their Native language because children in these communities speak English exclusively. In other communities, the Native language is the first and primary language. All the Pueblos are active with traditional ceremonies that are dependent on the Native language. All the Pueblos recognize that these traditions can only be taught by Pueblo people in the context of their own communities.

Despite the similarities in culture, each village is unique. Each Pueblo has its own government and is considered a separate, sovereign tribe. Each Pueblo recognizes its responsibility to educate its children to continue their traditions; likewise, each Pueblo sees the need to have its children educated in the American (I often refer to this as mainstream) system. The Pueblos believe that it is through understanding the mainstream American way of life and system of government that the Pueblos will be able to maintain their sovereignty and traditional way of life. Understanding how to best educate Pueblo children in mainstream schools is therefore important. This is where the

role of research -- and how that research is done -- becomes important. This is the topic of this symposium – and I'll keep coming back to it.

As I prepared for this presentation, I was obsessing about squeezing all I want to say into a short time frame. I know the best way to do this is to have an outline of the important points I want to cover and to be sure that the written paper expresses what I want to say. This way, I know the points, and I have the paper as a back up in case I forget or run out of time. This is an example of how I have been trained in school settings to be prepared.

As a Pueblo woman, I would be more comfortable listening -- listening until I was sure I had something to say -- and then knowing once I started to speak that I could speak as long as I needed in order to explain my ideas fully. This full explanation would allow me to hook my thoughts to the ideas of the others in the group; it would allow me to reflect without having to commit to an idea and then defend it. Then I could listen and revise my own thinking. This process could take days and be spread out over a period of months or years. These difference are important because they influence my researcher-self (Peshkin, 1988) and they allow an aspect of a minority philosophy to co-exist with academia (Collins, 1991, and hooks, 1990 also recognize the power of minority perspectives in research).

This, however, is not a Pueblo meeting, so I am armed with note cards, a paper, and a daughter whose task it is to evaluate my performance so I can improve for some future, as yet unknown, talk. The primary goal of her evaluation is to assure I address all the points, and limit my "umming." This process is a bit odd because the topic of this talk is to encourage the use of appropriate methodology when conducting research in

Native communities. One appropriate methodological approach is capitalizing on the importance of oral tradition, a tradition that does not really reflect my oral presentation today because it does not have the constraint of time, linear order, and elimination of "umms!" Still, I will ramble some, as I do at home, and this format will allow – I hope – for a dialogue today that will help me to reflect and revise, and perhaps continue this process over a period of years.

The style of listening is also a difference in the two types of oral exchanges. In the Pueblo, listening is for knowledge, and understanding, and it is done with a focus on acceptance and respect for the people who are talking. Talking is often done in a storytelling-style (Schultz, 1998). High value is given to listening and understanding the viewpoint of the speaker. Listening is demonstrated through silence. In academia, the focus of listening is often on questioning, even challenging, others' ideas. Listening often is demonstrated through critique, response, and critique, and often it is done through writing. In fact this is recognized as an important aspect of the research process: giving ideas a public forum through writing. The Educational Researcher has responses and rejoinders that formalize this critique.

In Pueblo culture, as with many native cultures, oral tradition is an important element in passing knowledge from one generation to another; it is the way of maintaining the culture. Pueblo people have been in contact with Europeans and their descendents for 400 years; and therefore, they have been exposed to both the benefits and the drawbacks of written language. The Pueblos have chosen to continue to use oral tradition to maintain traditional culture; a strategy that has been successful for thousands of years.

Pueblo traditional culture, with its focus on oral tradition, is quite different than the mainstream culture, with its linear focus and heavy emphasis on the written word. In fact, although many of the Pueblos have an orthography and are capable of writing in their language, no Pueblo has chosen to record its business in its Native language. Given this, can the two cultures of the mainstream and the Pueblo benefit from each other in the arena of research? This is a question I will come back to.

In the past, researchers have entered Pueblo communities with a set agenda that has little to do with the needs/ philosophies/ traditions of Pueblo people. This agenda – in general -- has met the needs of the individual researcher and/or the institutions of the mainstream. There has been little or no benefit to the Pueblo community, and researchers' interpretations of Pueblo life are often inaccurate. At the end of the last century and the beginning of this one, the feeling among Pueblo people was that the researcher would not get their culture and beliefs "right," and so there was no harm in allowing outside researchers in. The Pueblos, like small communities everywhere, also prize courtesy. Pueblo people opened their homes and communities to outsiders. Since it has become apparent that researchers were doing things that did -- or could -- harm Pueblo communities, researchers have been viewed with suspicion. Inaccurate interpretations have caused outsiders to have an inaccurate view of Pueblos. The impact on education has been that educators have an inaccurate view of Pueblo students and how they learn. For example, a few years ago there was often a push to teach using primarily hands-on methods, ignoring the fact that in traditional settings Pueblo children are expected to learn through a variety of techniques: observation, exploration, listening, etc.

The Pueblo knows and understands itself through remembering the past, respecting the viewpoints of outsiders, and understanding the existence of multiple realities both within the Pueblo and between the Pueblo and outsiders. All of these are goals of qualitative research as well (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is the use of this knowledge and the intention behind gaining this understanding that may separate the Pueblo from many researchers. For the Pueblo, the use and intention must be tied to a potential benefit to the community. Research must address a need identified by the Pueblo. A need all Pueblos have identified is the need for their children to do well in the dominant culture's schools. Given this need, it is useful to anchor this discussion in a concrete example of an educational research project in Pueblo settings.

Statistics show that American Indians do poorly in mainstream school. Compared to minority and non-minority students, Indians have the lowest standardized test scores, the highest drop out rate and the lowest rate of completion of higher education (Swisher & Hoisch, 1992). These statistics can be misleading. In my own research, Pueblo students were successful in a variety of ways: some students did well on standardized tests, others had good grades, and still others were very involved in their traditional Pueblo life. Taken as a group, these Pueblo students did well in mainstream settings and in Pueblo traditional education (Enos, 1998). There was a balance of strengths that benefited the Pueblos.

Statistics on Pueblo students are questionable. The local schools that Pueblo students attend show a drop out rate of 2%. This is because if students ask for their school records to be forwarded to another school, they are not listed as drop outs, even if

they never attend another school. Most Pueblo students have the option of attending a Bureau of Indian Affairs school, a public school, or a private school. Many students transfer in and out of these different systems and can become "lost." Tribal leaders have expressed concern that they do not know where their children are, nor which school system serves their students the best. Furthermore, it may not be a problem if students drop out because they are focused on their traditional Pueblo education, particularly if other students from that Pueblo are doing well in school. This balance is positive only if the students stay in the Pueblo. Most students, even those who receive college degrees, return to their communities eventually (Enos, 1998).

The ideal, Pueblo leaders say, is to have each student succeed in school and understand traditional Pueblo ways. I am currently involved in researching a project that is based on this ideal. The project, Circles of Wisdom, proposes to assure that the curriculum Pueblo students receive is aligned kindergarten through twelfth grade with state standards and that true community-based activities incorporated throughout. In this way, no matter which local school Pueblo students chose to attend, they will meet the state (mainstream) standards, which is the goal of mainstream education. Ideally, the community-based education will connect school education to community needs. The school does not – CANNOT – teach Pueblo traditional education. But, the Pueblo does need to be able to communicate with the mainstream. There are environmental issues, which I will return to later, that the Pueblo and mainstream have to work on together. In order to assure federal government responsibilities to the Pueblo are met, the Pueblo needs grant writers and people who can monitor and report on the progress of these grants. By educating Pueblo students to understand environmental science, to write well,

and to organize information in a mainstream format, schools can help meet Pueblo needs. It is important to note that the Pueblo is the one identifying the need, not the researcher.

The two main research questions for this project, then, are: 1) Can a mainstream curriculum address Pueblo identified needs? (If so, how?, If not, why not?); and 2) What are appropriate techniques for designing, gathering, analyzing, and presenting Pueblo research? It is really the first part of this second question that I am addressing in this talk: What are appropriate techniques for designing and gathering research data in Pueblo communities?

One reason I was interested in organizing this symposium is that I have been disappointed by recent presentations that address the issue of cultural sensitivity in researching Native communities by simply recommending that researchers add a Native person to their research teams. I believe that this tokenism only appeases the research teams' conscience and does not address the complexity of different ways of understanding the world: the researchers' understanding and the Pueblos' understanding. Certainly we know from post-modern discourse that there are many more than these two understandings happening; a single Native American representative cannot account for the varied understandings within a Pueblo. Furthermore, a research team from the dominant culture holds a position of power in the mainstream. To expect a single Native person to be able to effectively address this power differential and truly be heard by others on the team is ignoring a complex historical relationship.

The power issues effecting the relationship between the Pueblos and the dominant culture reach beyond the relationship of outside researcher and Pueblo community. The Pueblos' first experience with non-Indians happened 400 years ago when Spanish settlers

came to New Mexico. The Pueblos and the Spanish spent over one hundred years developing a pluralistic society, where Pueblo culture was distinct from Spanish culture, yet the two cultures were on equal standing (Spicer, 1969). When Americans came into political power in the mid 1800s, the Pueblos were again put in the position of negotiating their place in a changing society. The influx of researchers was just one aspect of this change. And now, there is the added element of an academic structure where universities hold a position of power within the dominant. The Pueblos respect mainstream schooling, and therefore recognize the importance of university sanctioned research. However, the Pueblo way of knowing is also important. Is it possible to reconcile university and Pueblo ways of understanding in a manner that is mutually beneficial?

Pueblo communities' have a need for understanding (i.e., research) to be linked to addressing a need. For university research to address this, a shift needs to be made from a researcher with a set agenda that addresses personal or professional goals, to a research model that moves toward a community-based focus for the research (Gulibert, 1998). My boss, a Harvard-educated Pueblo man, tells me that this will never happen; university researchers will not listen. I have to believe my boss is wrong.

In order to move toward a community focus, the design of research needs to happen in collaboration with the Pueblo community. Outside influences often set the parameters (or topic) of the initial discussion, but these parameters must be somewhat flexible in order for collaboration to be possible. A key to collaboration is rapport. Rapport is established in two ways: (1) by the ability to listen, as discussed previously; and (2) with a concrete tie to the community.

Research in Pueblo communities must follow a protocol, as identified by Cochiti Pueblo member Mary Romero (1994). This protocol includes meeting with the Pueblo governor to present the research project. The governor gives direction on further protocol. This may include meeting with Pueblo employees or the tribal council to give further explanations of the research and its potential benefit to the community. This protocol may be quite different when working with other tribal communities. For the most part, Pueblo people feel that their tribal council, headed by the governor, represents the community. This may be because the tribal council, in most Pueblos, is the traditional form of government. In some Native communities this is not the case, and tribal members may not feel the tribal government is representative of the tribe.

Continuing dialogue with the community throughout the research process is necessary. It is a challenge to work with a community group, particularly in the Pueblos when pre-arranged meetings often are canceled at the last minute. These cancellations usually occur because priority is given to sovereignty issues, ceremonial activities that cannot be planned in advance, and extended family demands. But it is the researcher's responsibility to be flexible enough to work with these challenges.

As I talk about the "rules" they form a kind of recipe that seems as trite and useless as the recommendation to just add a Native person to the research team. An example, I think is better. At Santa Fe Indian School[1], we have a community based education model we call CBEM. It is a model for Pueblo education, not for research; however, I think lessons learned through this model program can be applied to research. The CBEM began with parameters set by the school and funding sources. The CBEM pamphlet states, "The concept of community-based education seeks to engage students

and tribal communities in issues related to their environment, natural resources, and health . . . in an attempt to stimulate student interest and motivation in the areas of math and science."

These were the CBEM guidelines. The five Pueblos the program initially worked with had their own restrictions. Some had newly forming environmental departments that were establishing relationships with the Los Alamos National Laboratory. CBEM was able to hook up with these environmental departments to identify a real need in these Pueblos that students could help address. Each community had different needs, but all Pueblos were dealing with watershed issues and the impact the Lab has on the Pueblo environment. Community members and non-Indians staffed both the environmental departments and the CBEM. The key to the relationships was the listening that took place between all parties, and the willingness to reschedule meetings. Furthermore, all participants had roles that had a clear benefit to the community. Most were community members and all were either educators of Pueblo students or worked in Pueblo environmental departments. The meetings between the Pueblo communities and CBEM took place over a period of many months and centered on discussion, listening with respect, and patience. It eventually became clear to all participants that the community would decide the focus of the curriculum – given the parameter that the focus would be on environmental issues -- and the school would write the curriculum, which would focus on math and science.

A multifaceted evaluation of CBEM was done for the first two years (1995-97); it included eleven different evaluation instruments and incorporated both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Now, two years after that evaluation, Pueblo community

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[1] For more information about Santa Fe Indian School, see Hyer (1990).

members refer to three qualitative examples to demonstrate the success of the CBEM. (1) CBEM spent the first year and a half of the program listening to community needs and incorporated those needs into a curriculum that remains flexible. (2) Community members now see their own high school students and recent graduates working in their communities' environmental departments, and more graduates are going into environmental fields in college. (3) Elders and students are now able to discuss how community issues can be addressed at school. Pueblo members do not site the quantitative results of the evaluation. The value of the program lies in the fact that it addresses a need based on community-identified issues, and that the results are a clear benefit to the tribe.

Please see Figure 1 for an overview of designing and gathering research. This process fits with the Pueblo philosophies that work (including research) must benefit the community, and understanding is gained through listening.

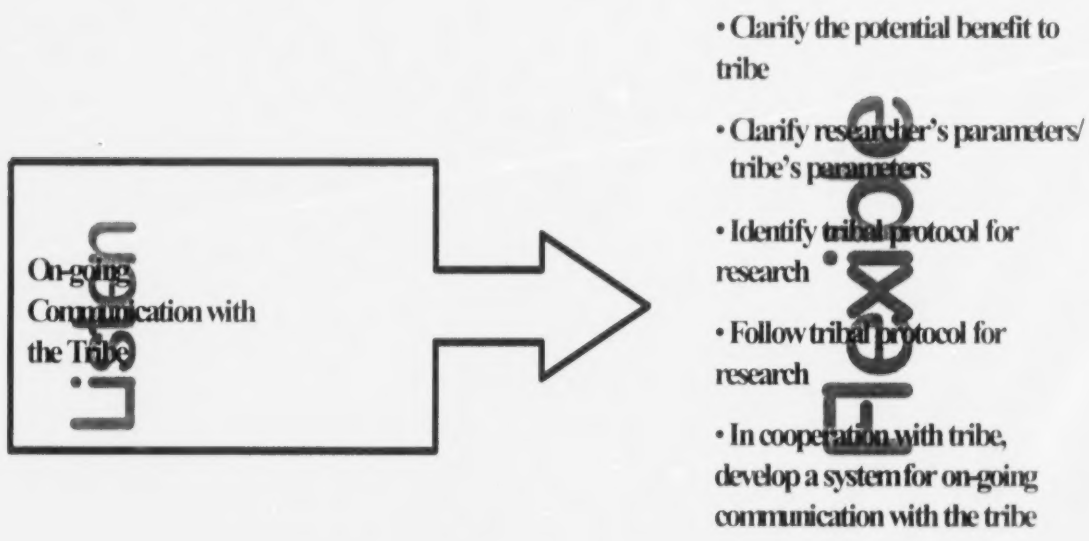
Listen
On-going Communication with the Tribe
Flexible
• Clarify the potential benefit to tribe
• Clarify researcher's parameters/ tribe's parameters
• Identify tribal protocol for research
• Follow tribal protocol for research
• In cooperation with tribe, develop a system for on-going communication with the tribe

Figure 1. Research in Native communities.

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In summary, I believe the research agenda is changing. I believe it is possible to do university-sanctioned research that incorporates Pueblo understanding. I believe researchers are learning to listen. I hope I am not hopelessly naïve.

April 1999 Draft

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